VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

4. (amended) The method according to claim 1 [at least one of claims 1 to 3], wherein said sample is taken from a body fluid, a tissue, or an organ, in particular an eye, of said subject.

7. (amended) The method according to claim 1 [at least one of claims 1 to 6], wherein a variation of said level of Cystatin C or a transcription product of a Cystatin C gene in said sample from said subject relative to said reference value representing a known health status indicates a diagnosis, or prognosis, or increased risk of said age-related macular degeneration in said subject.

8. (amended) The method according to claim 1 [at least one of claims 1 to 7], wherein a varied activity of Cystatin C in said sample from said subject relative to said reference value representing a known health status indicates a diagnosis, or prognosis, or increased risk of said age-related macular degeneration in said subject.

9. (amended) The method according to claim 1 [at least one of claims 1 to 8], wherein said Cystatin C gene is a polymorphic variant of the Cystatin C wild-type gene.

12. (amended) The method according to claim 1 [at least one of

claims 1 to 11], wherein said subject is a human.

13.(amended) The method according to claim 1 [at least one of claims 1 to 12], wherein said Cystatin C is determined in its monomeric form.

14. (amended) The method according to claim 1 [at least one of claims 1 to 13], wherein at least one of said substances is detected using an immunoassay, an enzyme activity assay and/or a binding assay.

15. (amended) The method according to claim 1 [at least one of claims 1 to 14], wherein said reference value is that of a level, or an activity, or both said level and said activity, of at least one substance which is selected from the group consisting of a transcription product of a Cystatin C gene, a translation product of a Cystatin C gene, a fragment of said translation product, an amyloid protein, and a transcription product of a gene coding for an amyloid protein in a sample from a subject not suffering from said age- related macular degeneration.

16. (amended) The method according to claim 1 [at least one of claims 1 to 15], further comprising comparing a level, or an activity, or both said level and said activity, of at least one substance which is selected from the group consisting of a transcription product of a Cystatin C gene, a translation product of a Cystatin C gene, a fragment of said translation product, an amyloid protein, a transcription product of a gene coding for an amyloid protein in said sample with a level, an activity, or both said level level and said activity, of at least one of said substances in a series of samples taken from said subject over a

period of time.

17. (amended) The method according to claim 1 [at least one of claims 1 to 16], wherein said subject receives a treatment prior to one or more of said sample gatherings.

22. (amended) The method of claim 19 [at least one of claims 19 to 21], further comprising: determining a level, or an activity, or both said level and said activity, of at least one substance which is selected from the group consisting of a transcription product of a Cystatin C gene, a translation product of a Cystatin C gene, a fragment of said translation product, an amyloid protein, and a transcription product of a gene coding for an amyloid protein, in a sample from said subject; and comparing said level, or said activity, or both said level and said activity, of at least one of said substances to a reference value representing a known disease or health status.

24. (amended) The method according to claim 22 [or 23], wherein a varied activity of Cystatin C in said sample from said subject relative to said reference value representing a known health status indicates a diagnosis, or prognosis, or increased risk of said age-related macular degeneration in said subject.

28. (amended) The use [according to] of a kit for diagnosis or prognosis of age-related macular degeneration, or for determination of increased risk of developing age- related macular degeneration, or for monitoring progression of age- related macular degeneration in said subject, or for monitoring success or failure of a therapeutic treatment of said subject, said kit comprising at least

one reagent which is selected from the group consisting of (i) reagents that selectively detect a transcription product and/or a translation product of a Cystatin C gene, (ii) reagents that selectively detect a fragment of a translation product of a Cystatin C gene, (iii) reagents that selectively detect a mutation or polymorphism in a Cystatin C gene, and (iv) reagents that selectively detect a transcription product and/or a translation product of a gene coding for an amyloid protein [at least one of claims 25 to 27] for working the methods according to claim 1 [claims 1 to 24].

31. (amended) The method according to claim 29 [or 30], wherein said agents are cathepsin derivatives or Cystatin C analoga.

32. (amended) The method according to claim 29 [at least one of claims 29 to 31], wherein per se known methods of gene therapy and/or antisense nucleic acid technology are applied to administer said agent(s).

33. (amended) The method according to claim 29 [at least one of claims 29 to 32] comprising grafting donor cells into the eye of said subject, said subject or donor cells preferably treated so as to minimise or reduce graft rejection, - wherein said donor cells are genetically modified by insertion of at least one transgene encoding said agent(s).

37. (amended) The modulator of claim 34 [claims 34 or 36], wherein the modulator is capable of modulating a polymorphic variant of the wild-type Cystatin C gene, in particular a B allele.